

SELBY AVENUE SMALL AREA PLAN

An Amendment to the
Land Use Chapter of the
Comprehensive Plan

Adopted by the Saint Paul City Council
August 8, 1997

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Introduction

In July 1995, the City Council initiated a Small Area Plan and 40-Acre Zoning Study for Selby Avenue between Hamline Avenue and Virginia Street. The Council noted that development progress had been made over the last 10 years but that there remained vacant and underutilized property that could undermine the Avenue's stability and vitality. Accordingly, they asked that a task force be formed to develop a framework of future land use, zoning changes, and public/private investment for the Avenue for adoption by the Planning Commission and City Council.

A task force was formed made up of representatives of the Lexington Hamline Community Council, Summit University Planning Council, Ramsey Hill Association, Selby Area Community Development Corporation, Cathedral Hill Business Association, and area residents and business owners. (See credits for task force members.) The task force met from January 1996 through November 1996 to draft this plan. They considered the existing 1993 Lexington Hamline and 1989 Selby Avenue Land Use small area plans for the avenue, existing zoning and land use, and the 1988 Community Design Center's marketing studies. They toured the avenue and met with staff of the Selby Area Community Development Corporation and Twin Cities Housing Development Corporation and property owners concerning possible B-2C zoning and rezoning of the business area between Oxford and Chatsworth.

Issues and Assets

Here are the issues and assets of Selby Avenue that the task force has identified as those that the plan should deal with.

Issues

- Too many vacant business buildings and lots.
- Poor appearance of buildings and streetscape.
- Missing buildings in residential and business blocks.
- Buildings turning their backs on the street - long blank walls face the street.
- Vacant property at neighborhood gateway at Selby and Dale corners.
- Perception that crime is worse than it actually is in area. Assets
- Good and affordable housing stock.
- Opportunity for new and expanding businesses in vacant buildings and on vacant lots.
- Proximity to downtown and state capitol jobs and cultural institutions.
- Well designed, historic buildings all along Selby.
- Selby businesses can serve the neighborhood consumer market area between the Grand and University Avenues market areas.

- Three distinct parts to Selby - Western to Dale, Dale to Lexington, and Lexington to Hamline.
- Neighborhood strength through celebrations and organizations.
- Diverse population.
- Selby is easily accessible and has strong name identification.

Land Use and Zoning Plan

Assumptions

1. Economic and physical conditions of buildings on Selby Avenue have improved since the last plans were completed for Selby (1989 for Summit University and 1993 for Lexington-Hamline). The commercial space at Western, much of which had been vacant, is now occupied. The business building at the northeast corner of Milton has been renovated for offices and housing, and affordable housing has been established between Chatsworth and Avon through rehabilitation of existing housing and new construction. New businesses have been established, and more are being planned east of Dale. There have been significant investments in improvements to the residential areas to the north and south of Selby. Those who live near, shop, or work on Selby know that it is changing for the better.
2. While there have been recent improvements along Selby Avenue, much work is yet to be done to fill vacant building space, vacant lots, and rehabilitate buildings.
3. Selby Avenue's trade area for neighborhood retail and services is limited by competition from the existing businesses on Grand and University Avenues.

Strategies

Overall

1. Selby Avenue should remain a mixed use street of residential and business uses. The land use plan provides approximately 45% residential use, 43% business use and 12% institutional use. (See map 1.)
2. Land planned for residential or commercial use should be zoned now to the appropriate zoning district so that development can take place without having to go through rezoning petition processes. (See Map 2.)
3. Upon city adoption of this small area plan, its land use plan and zoning will be in accord with one another. In the future, requests for rezonings should be granted or denied based on a determination of whether or not the proposed residential or business development will improve the mixed use character of Selby Avenue.
4. The streetscape (the road, boulevard, sidewalk, signs, and lighting) of Selby Avenue should be made more attractive.

Business

5. Improving the business areas on Selby will make the greatest contribution to the revitalization of Selby.
6. The most important short term improvement for Selby is to develop businesses on the city owned land at the northeast and southwest corners of Dale.
7. The opportunity for business development will be increased by rezoning the following properties:
 - (a) seven nonconforming business properties are rezoned for business. Nonconforming business properties are used for business, but are zoned residentially. In order to change to another business use or expand, a permit is needed from the planning commission. With the properties zoned business, businesses may change and expand if they meet the requirements of the business zone. These are the properties shown on Map 2 proposed to be rezoned to OS-1 or B-2 located at Syndicate, the north side of the street between Griggs and Dunlap, at Lexington, on the south side of the street east of Grotto, on the north side of the street east of Mackubin, and at Virginia.
 - (b) one vacant residentially zoned parcel on the south side of the street east of Kent next to an existing business is rezoned to business for business expansion or parking.
 - (c) two vacant residentially zoned parcels adjacent to vacant business property at the southwest corner of Milton and Selby are rezoned to B-2. The adjacent business properties are rezoned to B-2 also so that the corner can be uniformly developed.
8. There have been many private and public improvements to the area east of Dale. In the future, public incentives and subsidies should be focused on the business areas between Dale and Lexington to encourage private development.
9. Working with the businesses, studies to determine physically and economically possible improvements to the design of the business areas of Selby should be undertaken.
10. The task force considered rezoning residential properties between Milton and Avon and between Dale and Arundel to B-2C. (B-2C zoning allows residential uses and, in addition, allows the residential uses to be converted to business uses, such as retail shops, hair salons, or offices.) The task force does not recommend at this time that residential properties be rezoned to B-2C. Here are the reasons not to rezone to B-2C:
 - a. There are many vacant zoned business properties now; these should be developed before further business zoning is considered. Adding B-2C could divert development away from these vacant properties.
 - b. Adding business property could unbalance the mix of residential and business along the street.
 - c. Off-street parking that is needed when houses are converted to business cannot be provided by many properties because of small lot size and lack of alley access to parking lots.

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The task force recommends that the issue of B-2C be reconsidered in 5 years to see if conditions warrant B-2C zoning at that time.

In the meantime, property owners may petition the city to rezone their property by following the city's rezoning procedures. The following guidelines should be considered for proposed rezoning to B-2C:

- a. Petitions to rezone to B-2C are likely to concern only one lot and some may be bordered on both sides by residential uses. These petitions should not be denied on the grounds of "spot zoning" but should be evaluated on the guidelines below.
- b. Upon conversion to business the off-street parking can be provided. c. The property has alternative, e.g., alley or side street, access.
- d. The business use of the property will not adversely affect nearby residential property.
- e. The petitioner shows that appropriate business space suitable for the use is not reasonably available elsewhere on Selby.

Residential

- 11. Develop infill housing on the two vacant residential lots on the south side of the street east of Milton and east of Victoria.
- 12. Continue to rehabilitate housing, especially between Chatsworth and Avon.
- 13. Five residential parcels are rezoned to reflect their current use and best future use. On the north side of Selby at Griggs, two single family properties and one two-family property are rezoned to RT-1 (one and two family residential) from RM-2 (apartments). At the northwest and southwest corners of Mackubin, two condominium buildings are rezoned to RM-2 from B-2 (community business).

Industrial

- 14. The plan no longer recommends industry on six sites between Saint Albans and Milton as the 1989 plan did. Some limited light industry, such as printing, assembly of small precision goods, and wholesaling is allowed in B-3 zoning districts. This should be the means of allowing industrial development on Selby. If additional types of limited industry are found to be appropriate for Selby, then the B-3 zoning district regulations can be amended to allow them, either as permitted or special condition uses.

Design Guidelines

Most of Selby Avenue east of Dale is within the Historic Hill Heritage Preservation District. New construction and exterior rehabilitation is subject to the district's design guidelines and must be reviewed and approved by city staffer the commission before construction can begin.

Selby Avenue west of Dale was developed at a later date than the Hill District, generally between 1900 and 1940. The siting of buildings along this section, however, is similar to the Hill District, with business buildings placed at the sidewalk and often at the corners of blocks and residential buildings setback from the street. It is in the city's best interest to preserve and promote this distinct urban pattern of older cities. Good design is good for business and has a positive effect on the surrounding neighborhood.

The design guidelines should be promoted by all who deal with development along the street - the district councils, the community development corporation, businesses owners, and residents. They should be used by city staff when reviewing proposed development in the site plan review process and when selling city owned land.

Business areas

1. New buildings (except those for auto oriented uses, such as gas stations) should be constructed at the front lot line, next to the sidewalk. Buildings should not be set back from the street with parking in front of the building; this is largely a suburban development pattern and should be avoided on Selby.
2. On the ground floor of buildings, windows should face the street and be a dominant feature of the building. The upper floors of buildings should be predominantly solid. If windows have been filled in, they should be opened as much possible. Windows on the street mean that there are more "eyes" on the street which can contribute to safety.
3. Building materials are important to the quality of business blocks and surrounding areas. The building materials of new buildings should relate to the materials of the surrounding buildings. For rehabilitation of existing buildings it is best to stay with the materials of the original building rather than attempting to change them.
4. Parking lots should be separated from the sidewalk by a landscaped strip. This will partially screen the lot and maintain the continuity of buildings placed at the sidewalk.



Residential

5. New buildings should be sited at a distance not more than 5% out-of-line from the setback of existing adjacent buildings.
6. Building materials are important to the quality of residential blocks and surrounding areas. The building materials of new buildings should relate to the materials of the surrounding buildings. For rehabilitation of existing buildings it is best to stay with the materials of the original building rather than attempting to change them.

SELBY AVENUE LAND USE PLAN

MAPI: PROPOSED LAND USE

Selby Avenue Plan



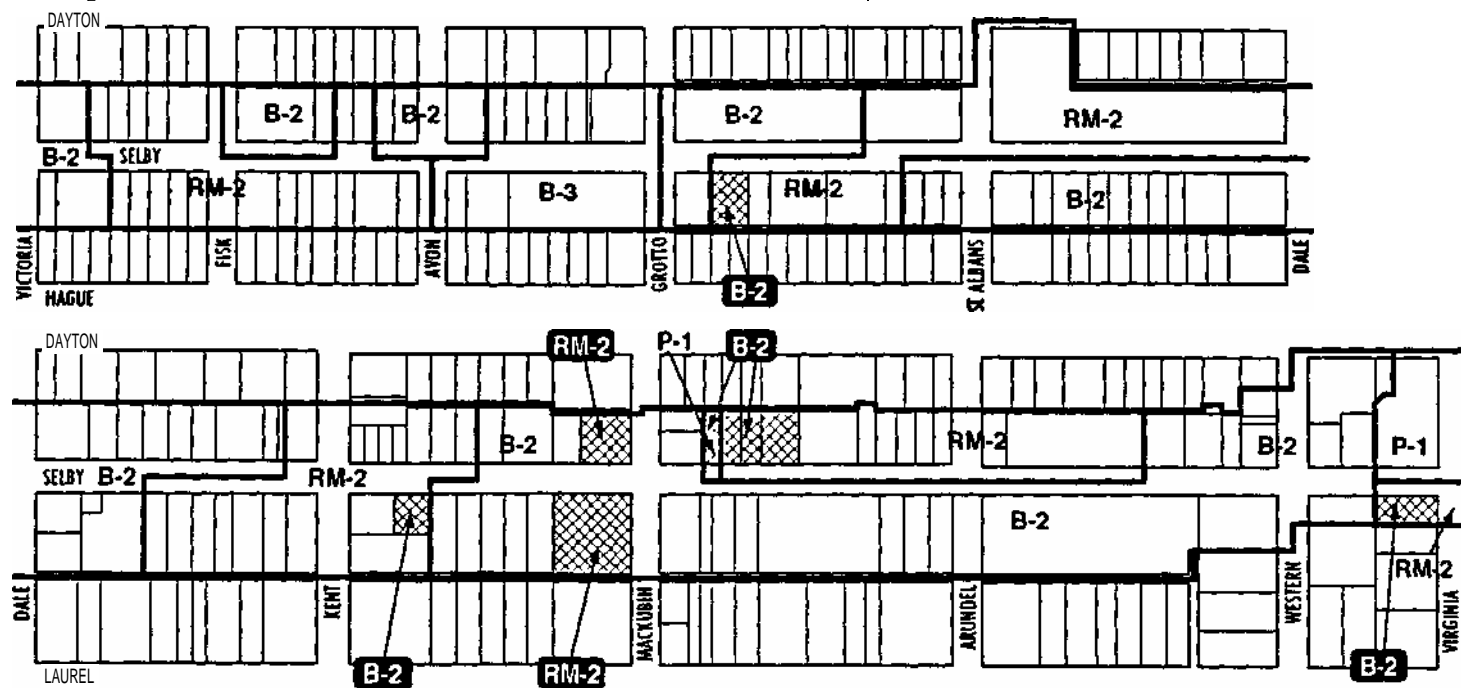
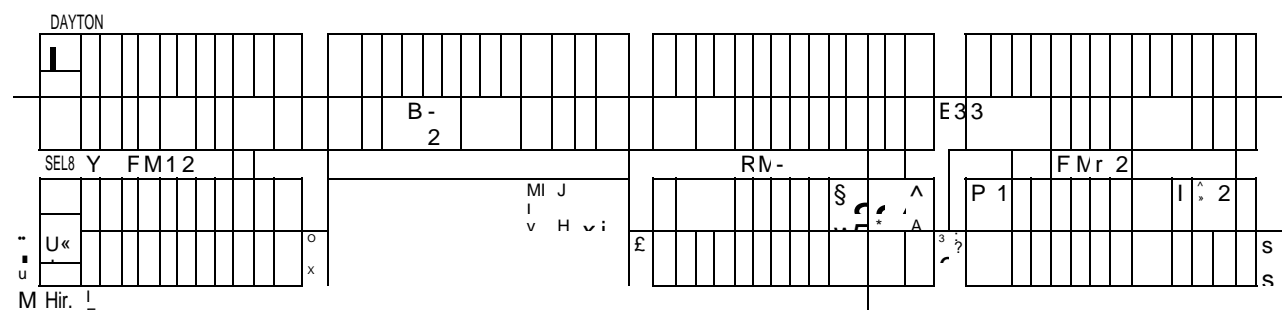
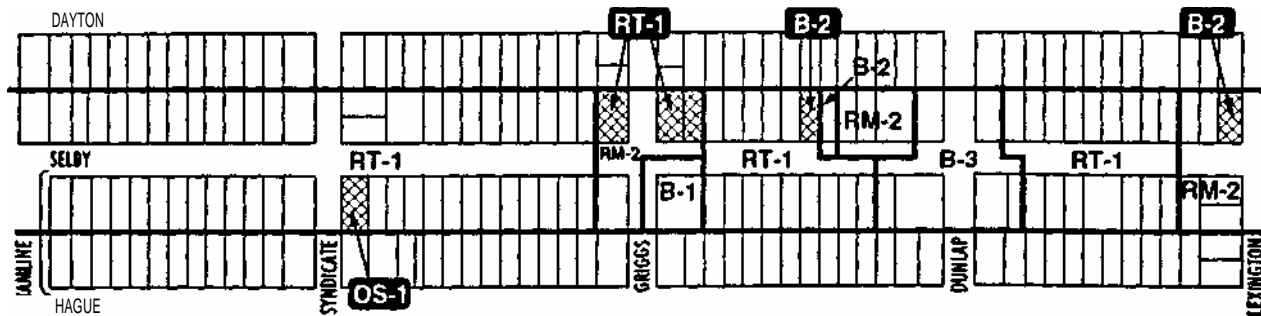
LEGEND

1 & 2 family residential multiple family residential business Institutional

SELBY AVENUE LAND USE PLAN

MAP 2: PROPOSED ZONING

Selby Avenue Plan



LEGEND: RT-1 1 & 2 family residential RM-2 multiple family residential B-1 local business B-2 community B-3 general business P-1 parking ^\$j]--E3 proposed zoning OS-1 office business

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Public Incentives Programs

Here are some public incentives programs that can be used to assist revitalization.

1. Citywide and neighborhood commercial loan program.
 - Purpose is to improve appearance and correct health, safety, and energy deficiencies of existing commercial properties.
 - Eligible work includes structural, mechanical, and electrical repairs; facade improvements; interior remodeling; professional fees; sign and energy improvements.
 - 50% or more of the project must be funded through a bank loan.
 - building owners or tenants may apply.
 - City staff approves most loans.
2. Commercial vacant building program.
 - Bring chronically vacant commercial buildings into productive reuse in a way that supports neighborhood revitalization, development plan objectives, and design guidelines.
 - Eligible work includes land acquisition, construction, rehabilitation, demolition, and other costs incidental to redevelopment. Rent subsidies are also available.
 - For profit and nonprofit developers and owners may apply.
 - Up to \$ 100,000 a project.
 - City staff reviews and approves applications.
3. Enterprise leverage fund.
 - Purpose is to fill financing gaps that cannot be filled by conventional or public financing sources.
 - Must meet HUD and Small Business Administration eligibility and funding criteria.
 - Typically no more than 10% of project costs.
4. Strategic investment fund program.
 - Purpose is to attract to city businesses that will expand city's economy.
 - To be eligible the business must be for profit and located outside of city.
 - Eligible work includes building renovation and leasehold improvements, land or building acquisition, and off-street parking.
 - Loan amounts determined by evaluation of positive economic effect, including the number of jobs produced in the city. Loans can be forgiven based upon job retention.
 - The Housing and Redevelopment Authority reviews and approves the loans.



5. Neighborhood Sales tax revitalization program (STAR).

- Purpose is to improve residential, commercial, cultural and economic development.
- Funds must be spent on physical improvements.
- Public, private, or nonprofit entities may apply.
- STAR funds must be matched on a 1:1 basis. Last year \$1,747,000 in loans, \$311,000 in seed Capitol loans, and \$789,000 in grants were available. There is also a small grant (\$5,000 - \$20,000) component
- Competitive process with applications for funds submitted once a year beginning with a notice of the coming year's program in December.
- Mayor and City Council approve applications.

6. Capital improvement budget funds.

- Purpose is to improve the City's long term capital improvements, such as parks, street, and libraries; housing; and economic development.
- The budget contains a variety of state, federal, and local fund sources. Projects and programs must meet the eligibility criteria of the fund sources.
- City agencies, district councils, business associations, civic associations, and nonprofit organizations may propose projects and programs. Organizations may submit applications individually or jointly with other organizations.
- Competitive process with proposals submitted every two years. Proposals for 1997-98 are prepared in January and 1 page proposal submitted in early February 1997.
- Mayor and City Council approve projects and programs.

7. Enterprise zone. (North side of Selby between Virginia and Lexington is within enterprise zone.)

- Project and programs have been developed and funds allocated.
- Additional programs and funds could be made available from federal government in the future.

8. Livable communities demonstration program.

- Purpose is to create projects that:
 - 1) link development or redevelopment with transit;
 - 2) link affordable housing with employment growth areas,
 - 3) intensify land uses that lead to more compact development or redevelopment,
 - 4) involve development or redevelopment that mixes incomes of residents in housing, including introducing higher value housing in lower income areas to achieve a mix of housing opportunities, or

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- 5) encourage public infrastructure investments which connect urban neighborhoods and suburban communities, attract private sector redevelopment investment in commercial and residential properties adjacent to the public improvement, and provide project area residents with expanded opportunities for private sector redevelopment.

Eligible work includes site-specific planning costs, design and consulting costs, and construction of the demonstration project.

Funds can be grants or loans.

City applies for funds. Competitive process with two application cycles a year. Approximately \$4.1 million a year is available.

The Metropolitan Council reviews and approves the applications.

Action Plan

1. A Selby Avenue action committee should be formed of stake holders in Selby's revitalization that consists of representatives of the Lexington-Hamline and the Summit-University Community Councils, the Ramsey-Hill Association, Cathedral Hill Business Association, Selby Area Community Development Corporation, Concerned Citizen Focus Group, and individual neighborhood businesses and residents. They will refine the action plan and oversee its accomplishment.
2. The land use portion of this plan identifies the area between Dale and Lexington as the area in which to focus revitalization efforts. Map 3 shows both publicly and privately owned vacant property in the focus area on which the action plan will concentrate revitalization efforts. Table A shows the amount and zoning of vacant property. (See item 15.)
3. The focus area should be marketed as providing the best opportunities to do successful revitalization such as that which has already occurred at the east and west ends of the street. Market the focus area to retail and service businesses, financial institutions, government, and foundations for neighborhood and citywide businesses.
4. The committee should determine a budget needed to attract business development to Selby.

The budget could designate funds for:

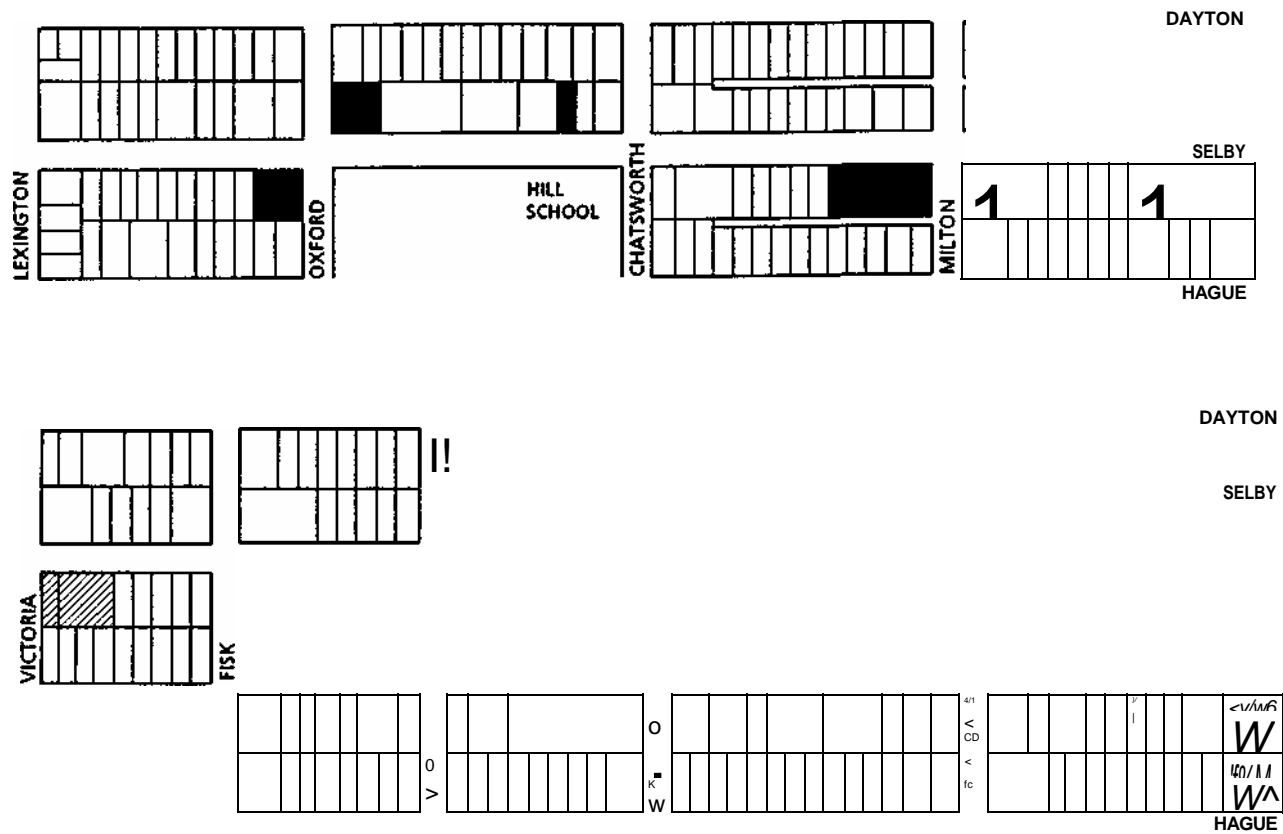
- low interest loans or grants for rehabilitation of existing buildings.
 - low interest loans or grants for new construction.
 - low interest loans or grants to move, expand or start-up businesses.
 - parking lot improvements.
 - design services to assist facade improvements.
5. The committee should seek money from a foundation to hire a staff person knowledgeable about marketing and development to promote the street.

6. The committee should seek funds for the budget from city programs, such as STAR, the metropolitan council's livable cities program, and foundations.
7. Existing programs in place, such as the commercial loan, vacant building, enterprise leverage, and strategic investment fund can be used on an individual basis.
8. The business and residential uses that will be sought are those permitted by the underlying zoning of the property.
9. For businesses that serve the residential neighborhood, the use of public incentives should emphasis attracting complimentary businesses.
10. More efforts should also be made to foster minority business start-ups, retention, and expansions from within the community.
11. The design guidelines of this plan will be used for siting new building and rehabilitation of existing buildings.
12. Public improvements to the Selby Avenue streetscape should be made that enhance its appearance and pedestrian safety and are historically compatible.
13. A program should be developed to keep Selby Avenue clean and attractive. This could be modeled on the Cathedral Hill Business Associations "adopt a block program" where businesses volunteered to keep a designated block clean during the summer.
14. The committee should promote the provision of adequate parking for Selby Avenue businesses and residences and explore the shared use of existing parking lots as a means of increasing parking.
15. Areas outside of the focus area should not be neglected. Rehabilitation of existing buildings, new development, and parking improvements should be assisted as needed.



MAP 3: VACANT PROPERTY

Selby Avenue Plan



LEGEND

privately owned

HRA owned

TABLE A: VACANT PROPERTY

Proposed Zoning	Vacant Land With Buildings	Vacant Land Only	Total
B-2	29,070	80,685	109,755
B-3	4,920	24,080	29,000
RM-2		9,200	9,200
P-1		17,600	17,600
Total	33,990	131,565	165,555

Selby Avenue Small Area Plan Task Force

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